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## **Chapter One: Why Study Comparative Education?**

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What is Comparative Education and why study it? The answers to these questions are rich and varied, as we hope you will discover through this introduction to the field. For centuries, educators have acted on what we might call the “comparative” impulse: attempting to understand and improve their systems of learning by looking at others. This impulse is captured in the title of one of the most popular and enduring books in Comparative Education, *Other Schools and Ours* (King, 1979). Throughout the 20th century the comparative impulse fed wide-ranging efforts to solve problems of economic development, social conflict and social inequality through educational reform. It also spawned important critical comparisons of such efforts, leading to pioneering work on the role played by education in the construction of global and national social systems.

There is no one answer to the question of what Comparative Education is, though many scholars have attempted to define the field over the years (see for example, Bray, 2003; Crossley & Watson, 2003; Manzon, 2011). Some definitions are quite simple: “comparative education has developed as a field devoted broadly to the study of education in other countries” (Kelly, Altbach, & Arnove, 1982, p. 505, cited in Kubbrow & Fossum, 2003, p. 5). Others focus on the

element of change and the use of comparison to understand and modify our own educational policies and practices based upon lessons learned from others and other systems:

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By the expression ‘comparative study of education’ we mean a systematic examination of other cultures and other systems of education derived from those cultures in order to discover semblance and differences, and why variant solutions have been attempted (and with what result) to problems that are often common to all. (Mallinson, 1975, p. 10, cited in Crossley & Watson, 2003, p. 17)

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At its most basic, Comparative Education offers a starting point for improving our educational systems and our classroom practices. It also challenges us to think broadly about the link between local practices and global issues, and to explore the overlapping values and social systems that underpin the educational enterprise itself. For teachers, an understanding of the Comparative Education literature helps for reflection on issues of concern in their own classrooms such as diversity, conflict/peace, teaching approaches, curriculum and classroom organization in a wider global context and for learning from the innovations, experiences and practices of other teachers, schools, countries and regions.

Comparative Education has been developed over a period of nearly two centuries, and its rich literature constitutes a resource for teachers, which is now more accessible than ever before, through the availability of web-based materials. The purpose of this text is to introduce you to the main ideas and literature of the field, and to give you a taste of Comparative Educational

analysis in the twelve theme-based chapters that follow this introductory chapter. We have selected themes relating to teaching and learning, the child's right to education, alternative schooling, gender, curriculum and pedagogy, school improvement, indigenous knowledge, multiculturalism, conflict resolution and global citizenship, all topics important for new, as well as more seasoned teachers. We have invited experienced scholar-educators to present comparative analyses that will enable you to see how much can be learned from attention to education in one or several other societies, nations, regions or civilizations.

In this introductory chapter, we will begin with an overview of the early history of Comparative Education, then look at how the field developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, and how it expanded to include international education after the Second World War. We also suggest that socio-cultural, economic, technological and political changes and processes associated globalization have impacted Comparative Education research and practice. And finally, we look at the ways in which educators have contributed to the development of the field, and its close links with such international organizations as UNESCO and the World Bank.

## <A>The Early History of Comparative Education

Comparative Education developed along with such other social sciences as sociology and psychology in Europe in the early 19th century. However, the field had many early antecedents in the experiences of learning across regions and civilizations that can be found throughout ancient and medieval history. Plato's famous master-work, *The Republic*, drew upon some ideas of education and society he found admirable in the city state of Sparta, which he saw as having greater discipline and order than his native Athens. The Greek scholar and general, Xenophon,

introduced Persian education to Greece through the biography he wrote of the magnanimous King Cyrus. Subsequently during the Roman Empire, the famous scholar Cicero made a comparison of Greek and Roman education systems, and concluded that a state controlled education system was superior to a family-centred private system, since it nurtures bonds with the state that are important to a democracy (Jones, 1971; Trethewey, 1976).

Over the same period, Chinese thinkers developed educational ideas and texts in the Five Classics, compiled by Confucius and later philosophers, which formed the core of a uniquely Chinese approach to education. While teaching and learning took place largely in family or clan-based schools at the local level, the imperial government administered examinations at prefectural, provincial and national levels to select the most knowledgeable and talented young people for government service. This very early meritocracy attracted attention from such nearby states as Japan, Korea and Vietnam, resulting in profound educational and philosophical influences from China on these societies, including the adoption of the Chinese ideographic script. China also remained open to learning from its neighbours to the west, sending numerous emissaries to India to bring back ideas and texts from Buddhism. Hundreds of texts were translated into Chinese and had a long lasting influence on education and society in the whole East Asian region for many centuries (de Bary, 1988).

The medieval period saw the beginning of travel and interchange between Asia and Europe, over the fabled Silk Route and by sea. Marco Polo's account of China in the 13th century tells little about its education system, since the civil service examinations had been halted under the Mongol dynasty. Later European visitors, such as the Jesuits of the 16th and 17th centuries, however, wrote admiring accounts of Chinese education that had considerable influence in Europe. One result was the development of highly selective examinations in France

for entry to the Grandes Écoles, which in turn assured employment in the nation's civil service. While the Enlightenment and the emergence of modern science and industrialism are often regarded as European achievements, Comparative Education explorations make it clear that diverse educational contributions, such as mathematics from India, and optics and medicine developed by Arabic scholars, were essential foundations for European science (Hayhoe & Pan, 2011).

### <A>Comparative Education in the 19th Century

Marc Antoine Jullien, who is often regarded as a founder of the field of Comparative Education, was born in 1775 and experienced the French Revolution as a teenager. Always a democrat in spirit and orientation, his liberal ideas were unacceptable to Napoleon, and he was given low-level positions in the inspectorate that required travel to Holland, Germany and other countries of Europe. He became more and more interested in education, visiting progressive educators such as Johann Pestalozzi and Philipp von Fellenberg in Switzerland, and corresponding with leaders as distant as Czar Alexander of Russia and Thomas Jefferson of the United States.

After years of travel, observation and writing, Jullien developed a plan for Comparative Education, which he published in 1816. In it he called for the establishment of a Normal Institute of Education for Europe, which would educate teachers in the best-known methods of teaching as a model for Europe. The Institute was to publish a regular bulletin to encourage periodical communication among “all informed men engaged in the science of education” (Fraser, 1964, p. 39). It was also to stimulate the writing of “elementary books... in the different branches of

science, which can direct childhood and youth from the first elements to the most advanced steps of human knowledge... by a continuous series of well-linked exercises” (Fraser, 1964, p. 40). Finally, education itself was to be developed into a “positive science” through the collection of facts and observations from different countries and their arrangement in analytical charts, which “permit them to be related and compared, to deduct from them certain principles... This would ensure that teachers were not abandoned to narrow and limited rules, to the caprices and to arbitration of those who control [education]...” (Fraser, 1964, p. 40-41).

Jullien died in 1848, at the age of 73, never having been able to realize this dream of an international institute for Comparative Education. Those who did carry forward the work of Comparative Education were mainly educators involved in developing new state systems of education, who looked to societies other than their own for ideas that would help in this process. Victor Cousin, who became Minister of Public Instruction in France in 1840, found inspiration in the Prussian system of primary education, and in approaches to technical education in Holland (Brewer, 1971). Horace Mann, who was the first Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, made a six-month tour to Europe in 1843 and wrote a report comparing educational systems in Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland and England. This report greatly influenced the development of common schools for all children in the United States.

K. D. Ushinsky, a Russian reformer who lived from 1824 to 1870, wrote extensively on educational practices in European countries and the United States, seeking to identify principles that would facilitate educational reform. Sir Michael Sadler, a British scholar and educator, who lived from 1861 to 1943, was responsible for an Office Of Special Reports for the British government between 1897 and 1903, which published studies of education in Germany, India, and many other countries. Sadler is best known for his warning against the borrowing of

educational patterns from one society to another, and his insistence that educational institutions need to be understood first in relation to the culture and society in which they are found (Bereday, 1964a; Jones, 1971).

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“We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant.”

— Sir Michael Sadler (cited in Crossley & Watson, 2003, p.6)

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If European, American and Russian educators had a degree of freedom in their search for educational ideas outside of their own societies, Japanese and Chinese educators worked to create modern systems of education under a tremendous sense of threat and pressure. They saw modern education as essential for strengthening their nations from within, so that they could resist the forms of colonial domination and control that they saw imposed on many other regions of the world. In 1870, the Japanese government drafted a policy for sending students abroad, which identified those areas of strength that Japan wished to emulate – engineering and commerce from Britain, medicine, economics and some basic sciences from Germany, mathematics and basic sciences from France, architecture and shipbuilding from Holland, agriculture from the United States (Nakayama, 1989, p. 100). This pragmatic form of Comparative Education laid a sound basis for Japan’s economic development, while maintaining fundamental aspects of the Japanese spirit and cultural identity.

A few decades later, Chinese thinkers and educators also tried to study the educational systems of countries they might emulate and select those patterns that would help them establish a strong modern nation. Unfortunately, their political and economic progress was hindered by Japanese as well as Western imperialism. Nevertheless, they had the opportunity to experiment with educational patterns from Europe, Japan and the United States. By contrast places such as India, Vietnam, the Philippines, and much of Africa had modern education systems imposed by Western colonizers. A darker side to Comparative Education emerged through the increasing use of comparative research in the design and reform of colonial education in the early 20th century (Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies, 1925; White, 1996).

#### <A>Comparative Education in the first half of the 20th Century

Only in the 20th century did Comparative Education begin to be taught in universities as an academic field of study, in spite of the fact that Jullien had laid a foundation for the field even earlier than Auguste Comte's work in founding sociology as a discipline. Many of the pioneering scholars of Comparative Education were either refugees or émigrés, who had personal experience of education in several different societies. In England, Nicholas Hans wrote one of the early textbooks, in which he emphasized the importance of understanding factors such as religion, language, geography and economy, which shaped the educational patterns of each nation differently. Hans had left Russia and moved to London at the time of the Soviet revolution of 1917. He maintained a great interest in Soviet education and society, nevertheless, and his comparative analysis of national education systems included England, France, the Soviet Union



and the United States (Hans, 1967).

The counterpart to Hans in the United States was Isaac Kandel, who was the leading comparativist at Teachers College, Columbia University from 1921 to the early 1950s. Kandel was born in Romania and did a Masters degree at Manchester University in England. He then emigrated to the United States and did a doctorate under John Dewey at Columbia University. Like Hans, Kandel hoped to see Comparative Education develop as a positive science, with appropriate use of statistical data on education in various countries of the world. He emphasized the importance of understanding the contexts of education in different societies, especially the impact of different political systems on educational development. He felt the distinction between highly centralized systems of education, such as that of the Soviet Union, and decentralized ones, such as that of the United States, was of great significance. His Comparative Education textbook, first published in 1933, covered education in England, France, Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States (Kandel, 1933).

Kandel also identified what was to become a central issue within the study of Comparative Education: the importance of education in the construction of world peace. This is a topic dealt with in Chapter 10 of this volume. At the end of World War I, women's suffrage organizations, international teachers' associations, and progressive educators each advocated the formation of an educational body within the League of Nations, to promote peace through international understanding and the expansion of educational opportunity. Among them were two women, Beatrice Ensor of England and Elisabeth Rotton of Germany, who went on to found the International League for New Education in 1921, and to promote the Geneva Declaration for the Rights of the Child in 1922. Comparative and progressive educators on both sides of the Atlantic were convinced that educational systems played a part in the development of what

Kandel described as “sinister” forms of nationalism (Kandel, 1933, p. xxiv). British and American governments, however, rejected an educational role for the League, arguing that education was a purely national concern.

Despite the absence of a footing inside the League of Nations, progressive educators went on to build the first international educational organization. Founded in 1929 and based in Geneva, the International Bureau of Education (IBE) came into being as an independent professional organization whose goals included the promotion of public education for all and the enhancement of education for international understanding. Operating under the leadership of noted Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget from 1929 to 1967, with Spanish Comparative Educator Pedro Rossello as vice-director, the IBE gained the status of an intergovernmental organization and developed many of the functions later taken on by UNESCO after World War II. It hosted an Annual Conference on Public Education that brought together leaders from national educational systems, and collected and published educational statistics from as many nations as were willing to contribute information. In 1933, it launched an International Yearbook of Education as well as four bulletins per year. The IBE was merged with UNESCO in 1967 (Suchodolski...[et al.], 1979).

Published histories of Comparative Education between the two World Wars have tended to focus on prominent scholars in Europe and North America, yet Comparative Education was also being developed and taught in other parts of the world. The first Comparative Education textbook in the Chinese language, for example, was published in 1928, five years before Kandel’s famous textbook. It was written by Zhuang Zexuan, a professor of education at Zhejiang University. Three other books on Comparative Education were published in China between 1930 and 1934, showing the great importance this field was given in Chinese

universities of the time (Jing & Zhou, 1985, p. 241). Like Hans and Kandel, Chinese scholars were trying to understand the broad principles of education that could be learned from comparative study. They also had urgent concerns about China's survival as a modern nation. Many Chinese educators had studied with John Dewey at Columbia or at other American universities, and there was huge interest in progressive child-centered education, with many experimental schools established in the Chinese coastal regions. However, it was extremely difficult for these ideas to be widely disseminated in circumstances of national economic collapse and a looming military invasion by Japan.

Chinese educators were also interested in the centralized French system of education, since it had succeeded in a geographic distribution of educational facilities throughout the country. This was a matter of great concern for China, where most of the modern schools were located in coastal areas and hinterland areas lagged far behind. At the same time, educators feared their nationalist government would use educational centralization as a means to suppress freedom of thought and to exert direct political control over schools. Comparative education studies provided important contextual analysis to help them wrestle with these difficult questions.

#### <A>Comparative and International Education in the second half of the 20th Century

After the Second World War, Comparative Education developed very rapidly as a field of research and practice. The development of the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, f. 1945) and the gradual inclusion of education in the work of other international development organizations, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, the United States

Agency for International Development, and the Canadian International Development Agency, created a new demand for Comparative Educational research. The Comparative and International Society (CIES) of the U.S. was founded in 1956, the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC) in 1967, and many other national societies came into being over these years. In 1970, the World Council of Comparative Education Societies was established, with its first Congress held in Ottawa in 1972. In addition to the many national societies that belong to the World Council, regional Comparative Education societies such as the Comparative Education Society in Europe and the Comparative Education Society of Asia are also members. Many national societies have their own academic journals, and participate actively in various kinds of international work, including liaison with such international organizations as UNESCO. Because they give equal importance to the academic work of comparative education analysis and to active involvement in international development concerns, many have broadened their description of the field by using the term “Comparative and International Education.”

The intellectual development of Comparative Education reflects the developments that one can see in such major social science disciplines as sociology, political science and anthropology. In the first two decades after the Second World War, its focus was almost entirely on the relationship between education and national development. Great attention was given to ensuring that Comparative Education be made fully “scientific,” given the availability of more reliable and comprehensive educational statistics and the possibility of large-scale quantitative analysis using computers. This “positivistic” phase gave rise to lively debates over the purpose and method of the field.

By the mid-1970s, however, it became clear that many of the findings of Comparative

Education had limited relevance for developing nations of the Third World. Most had gained political independence but their educational systems were still dominated by the ideas and influences of former colonial powers. Dependency theory or World Systems theory, both rooted in neo-Marxist scholarship, helped to identify barriers to independent and culturally authentic educational development in the structures of the world capitalist system.

Processes of globalization, an economic and technological phenomenon with political and socio-cultural dimensions, alongside the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, have spawned a new era of contention in the field of Comparative Education (Crossley & Watson, 2003). For two centuries Comparative Education tended to draw its analytic frameworks from Western civilization. In the most recent period, however, Comparative Education has emerged as a stage for an enhanced dialogue among peoples and civilizations. Examples of this are evident in many chapters of this textbook, which bring forth perspectives from indigenous peoples, women and multicultural communities, as well as different geographical regions, such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. Current debates are colored by theories of postmodernity and postcolonialism; as well as by heightened awareness of global topics such as equality, peace, and cultural and ecological sustainability. The brief overview of three widely debated approaches to Comparative Education that follows offers a critical perspective on its literature.

### <A>Comparative Education as Science?

One of the most influential comparative educators of the early post war period was George Bereday, an immigrant from Poland, who succeeded Isaac Kandel at Teachers College, Columbia University. His 1964 textbook, *Comparative Method in Education*, laid out a

systematic approach to collecting facts about different educational systems, juxtaposing them in tables or diagrammatic representation and then identifying principles or laws of education and societal development through inductive logic. Bereday recognized the difficulties of collecting comparable data and emphasized the need for Comparative Education researchers to learn the languages of the societies they studied and to limit their analyses to four or five countries. His textbook book included comparative analyses of educational issues in Poland, the USA, the USSR, England, France, Germany, and Columbia (Bereday, 1964b).

Bereday stimulated others in turn to reflect on how Comparative Education could become a science. In 1969 Harold Noah and Max Eckstein, two scholars who had immigrated to the U.S. from Britain, published an influential book entitled *Towards a Science of Comparative Education*. In this book they proposed an approach to Comparative Education that would make it possible to use educational data from a large number of countries, in order to discover causal relationships between desired educational outcomes, and the educational and societal inputs which were responsible for them. The more countries whose data could be used for these large-scale studies, the more “scientifically” reliable would be the findings, they suggested. With the dawning of the computer age, it was seen as less important to study the languages and historical contexts of different education systems – rather, the essential data about education and its relation to societal development could be quantified and expressed numerically (Noah & Eckstein, 1969).

Two major questions have occupied the attention of Comparative Educators working in this positivistic mode from the 1960s to the present time. The first explores the relation between education and economic development. What kinds of investment in “human capital” will produce the highest “social rates of return” (benefit to the economy) or “individual rates of

return” (income for the individual)? Economists are also interested in cost-benefit analysis and what are called “production function” studies, in which the unit costs of inputs are weighted against the outputs of schools. For example, is teacher training or the purchase of textbooks a better investment? These types of study are of particular importance for development agencies, such as the World Bank, whose educational loans are premised on successful economic outcomes, and the ability of the borrowing country to pay back the loans over time. In spite of increasingly sophisticated scientific techniques of analysis, however, these studies are far from precise.

The second question, which is of even greater interest to educators, is what factors in both school and society have a significant causal relationship with high educational achievement. What teaching styles produce the best results in mathematics? What size of class is optimal for high achievement in physics? What types of curricular organization result in most effective language learning? Beginning in the 1960s, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) began a series of studies to address these questions. Over the years more and more countries have participated, and alternative international studies of achievement, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have been developed. Chapter Thirteen of this text, by Anna. K. Chmielewski, Joseph Farrell and Karen Mundy, introduces the methods and findings of these large-scale cross-national studies.

Not all comparativists of the 1960s and 1970s agreed that Comparative Education should try to become “scientific” in its methodology. British scholar Edmund King believed that human society could not be compared with the workings of a machine. It was more like the exchange of ideas in a conversation than the interaction of forces in a physical system. He thus put great emphasis on a comparative understanding of core concepts of education in different societies and

nations.

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“It is not only the top-level planner who is so engaged nowadays, but the teacher in the classroom too, and also the parent or politician or employer who may be no expert in comparative studies *per se*, but who has an *experiential* contribution to make to the world’s comparative analysis.”

—Edmund King (1979, p. 20)

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King’s textbook, *Other Schools and Ours*, was first published in 1962, and reappeared in five subsequent editions. King dealt with Denmark, France, Great Britain, the USA, the USSR, India and Japan in this text (King, 1979). In his approach to research, King rejected the kinds of neutrality and objectivity that characterized scientific method, and emphasized subjective understanding of the hopes and expectations of teachers, students and administrators as vitally important inputs for educational policy. In the early 1970s, he carried out a large-scale comparative study of schools, teachers and students in England, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden, with a focus on gathering ideas for a new approach to post-compulsory education. This was a time when universities were still highly elitist institutions admitting only about two percent of young people aged 18 and above (King, 1974; 1975).

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“...attempts to equalize educational opportunity on a global scale have led to the ignoring of local cultural values and traditional forms of knowledge and ways of thinking, which are in danger of becoming extinct.”

— Vandra Masemann (2013, p. 128)

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Although King was not an anthropologist, his attention to the ways in which students and teachers understood and constructed their social worlds anticipated the kinds of approach to social theory associated with phenomenology and ethnography. One of the most influential comparative educators of a later period, Canadian scholar Vandra Masemann, developed an ethnographic approach to Comparative Education which attends to the ways in which human beings create meaning through education in different cultural contexts. Masemann describes her approach to Comparative Education as critical ethnography: She views neo-Marxism as an essential frame for a critical analysis of oppressive structures in the global economic system whose influence reaches right down to local schools (Masemann, 1982). In recent years, there has been increasing attention given to what actually happens within schools, including the organization of learning, teaching practices and efforts at school improvement, as demonstrated in Chapter Three by Joseph Farrell, Caroline Manion and Santiago Rincon-Gallardo, Chapter Four by Sarfaro Niyozov and Chapter Five by Stephen Anderson and Malini Sivasubramaniam.

Another challenge to Comparative Education as a “science” came from Brian Holmes. He did not reject scientific method, but claimed that Bereday, Noah and Eckstein were following an outmoded approach to science in their focus on causality. Holmes’ problem approach to

Comparative Education followed Karl Popper's idea of science as a series of imaginative conjectures that are subjected to rigorous testing in the specific conditions of the laboratory experiment. Those hypotheses that survive rigorous testing can be considered tentatively true until such time as they are proven false (Popper, 1963). Holmes felt comparative educators should identify important problems in education, look for solutions in the experiences of different societies, then predict which solutions would produce desirable educational results in the specific conditions of one society. These predictions would be tested not in the laboratory, but in the future unfolding of educational developments. For Holmes, the most significant elements in these specific conditions were cultural. He suggested ideal types as a sociological tool for taking into account deep-rooted religious and cultural beliefs about human persons, the nature of society and the nature of knowledge. He thus developed a methodology that he regarded as scientific in a post-positivist way, and which gave great importance to non-quantifiable religious and cultural values (Holmes, 1981).

Le Than Khoi and Gu Mingyuan challenged the limited notion of Comparative Education as science from a different direction by demonstrating the deep historical and cultural roots of non-Western educational systems – systems that could not be simply engineered through positive science. Both come from East Asia: - Le from Vietnam and Gu from China. Whereas Le has spent much of his career in France and written mainly in French, Gu Mingyuan studied in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, then returned to China to revive the field of Comparative Education there, beginning in the early 1960s.

Le Than Khoi's work suggests that Comparative Education could make possible a general theory of education derived from an in-depth study of the reciprocal relations between education and society in different types of civilizations over human history. Such a theory would

achieve a universalism that acknowledges how the achievements of modernity were derived from multiple civilizations, not only that of Europe. Le Than Khoi's approach to Comparative Education thus looks back into history, and recovers aspects of human heritage that have been forgotten in the rush to constitute Comparative Education as a science (Le, 1986).

Gu Mingyuan's approach to Comparative Education developed in a very different context. He entered university in the year of China's successful Communist revolution. After two years of study in Beijing, he was sent to study in the Lenin Normal College in Moscow for five years. On return to China in 1955, he was full of enthusiasm for all that Soviet ideas could offer to China's socialist educational development, only to face disappointments and setbacks as China's new leaders rejected Soviet assistance as social imperialism in 1958, and threw the country into turmoil by unleashing a cultural revolution in 1966. The centre and journal that Gu had established for the study of foreign education in the early sixties were closed down, and he was sent for hard labor in the countryside. Only after Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978 was he able to draw upon his extensive comparative knowledge of education systems in different parts of the world to advise China's leadership on educational reforms that would make possible the modernization of China's economy and society (Hayhoe, 2001).

Gu's first approach was to introduce human capital theory, and to show how this was not the preserve only of capitalist countries but was used by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*. Gu presented a comparative analysis of the modernization experiences of Western countries and the Soviet Union, which drew on extensive empirical data. On this basis, he persuaded the Chinese government to invest heavily in education (Gu, 2001a). Gu's scientific approach to Comparative Education proved liberating to educators who had long felt themselves the victims of political movements outside of their control. They were delighted to be freed from "the caprices

and...arbitration of those who control education,” to use a phrase from Jullien’s Plan for Comparative Education (Fraser, 1964, pp. 40-41).

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“Neo-classical development theory views schooling as being a ‘liberating process,’ in which the child is transformed from a ‘traditional’ individual to a ‘modern’ one.... But in dependency theory, the transformation that takes place in school cannot be liberating, since a person is simply changed from one role in a dependent system to a different role...The kind of economic structure able to absorb all the educated is not possible under conditions of the dependent situation. Thus a system of schooling which complements all people’s social utility is also not possible.” (Carnoy, 1974, pp. 56-57)

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Gu was not satisfied, however, to stay with this Western approach to Comparative Education. He developed a long-term research project to explore China’s own cultural and educational traditions, and to identify educational patterns and ideas that would provide an indigenous basis for China’s educational modernization (Gu, 2001b). He has also stimulated Chinese educators to reach out to the world and explain the unique educational ethos of East Asian countries, where Confucian traditions have been strong, and what this ethos can offer to educators elsewhere. Chapter Two of this volume, by Ruth Hayhoe and Li Jun, deals with this topic from a comparative philosophical perspective.

## <A>Comparative Education, Imperialism and the World System

In 1974 a book entitled *Education as Cultural Imperialism* by Martin Carnoy exploded like a bombshell in Comparative Education circles. Up to this time, the main units of Comparative Education analyses had been nation states and national systems of education, with educational systems in Europe and North America tending to dominate the literature. Carnoy's book showed how difficult it was for nations in the Third World to develop modern schools to serve their own social, political and economic development. Much that went on in schools in Africa, India and Southeast Asia was not decided by their own educators but was determined by the languages, curricular patterns and approaches to school organization that had been left behind by their colonizers. Educational policy was also shaped by ongoing dependence on development aid, which was described as "neo-colonialism."

Dependency theory was a form of neo-Marxism that had been developed by economists in Latin America to explain the widespread experience of underdevelopment or distorted development in countries of that region. They saw the cause for this in their role as peripheral parts of a world economic system controlled by centre countries in Europe and North America. Their education systems, which were dominated by European concepts they had inherited, served to make this subservience appear a normal and unavoidable stage of development. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire was one of the first to challenge this educational imperialism with his idea of "conscientization." He sought to stimulate Latin American young people and adults to see with their own eyes and to struggle for independence, dignity and self-determination (Freire, 1972). Freire's work has had wide ranging influence, most notably among educators interested in

transformative and liberatory approaches to learning (Schugurensky, 1998). The spread of Freirean pedagogy illustrates an important development in the field of Comparative Education: the expansion of South-North flows of educational ideas.

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“For feminist scholars of education in the Third World, our goal is to find ways in which schools can be made a force to better women’s lives.”

— Gail Kelly (cited in Kelly, 1996, p. 37).

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Some of the best-known scholars who pioneered this approach to Comparative Education are Robert Arnove, Philip Altbach, Gail Paradise Kelly, and Nelly Stromquist. Robert Arnove worked to relate Comparative Education to world system theory, another form of neo-Marxism which is based in a historical analysis of the development of the capitalist world system, and looks at the way core, semi-peripheral and peripheral regions are shaped by economic and capital flows (Arnove, 1980). Gail Kelly is recognized as one of the early women pioneers of the field of Comparative Education. As co-editor with Philip Altbach of the important book *Education and the Colonial Experience*, she built on her early research on education in Vietnam and French West Africa, where one could see the persisting influence of French colonial influences, to develop a critical approach to education in Third world countries (Altbach & Kelly, 1984). She also became a leading figure in feminist approaches to Comparative Education, editing several important studies on women in education in different parts of the world (Kelly, 1996; Kelly &

Elliot, 1982). Similarly, Nelly Stromquist sought to blend dependency and feminist theories, documenting the nature of gender inequality in education first in Latin America and later at the global level (Stromquist, 1995). Grace Mak has carried forward this work in Asia, with titles such as *Women, Education and Development in Asia: cross-national perspectives* (Mak, 1996). Chapter Seven of this volume, on Gender and Education, by Kara Janigan and Vandra Masemann deals with this literature.

Another critical approach to problems of education and imperialism came from a group of scholars who initiated the World Order Models Project (WOMP) in the late 1960s and described themselves as non-Marxist socialists. Johann Galtung, a Norwegian who held one of the world's first chairs in Peace Studies, developed a structural theory of imperialism. He identified structures of domination in political, economic, communications and cultural arenas, and proposed ways of countering them through solidarity among Third World nations (Galtung, 1971). Chapter Ten, by Kathy Bickmore, gives many insights into the field of peace studies pioneered by Galtung and its importance for education.

The loosely organized group of sociologists, educators, and political scientists associated with the World Order Models Project created space for visioning a more just and sustainable world order. They brought ideas from the civilizations of India and Africa into the mainstream of Western social sciences. While there were not many Comparative Education scholars among them, one article that became a classic in the field was Ali Mazrui's "The African University as a Multi-national Corporation" (Mazrui, 1975). The more recent scholarship of George Dei, with its focus on understanding the roots of African culture and spirituality as a source for educational innovation, is another important contribution to the goal of inter-civilizational dialogue and sustainability envisaged by the WOMP scholars (Dei, 2002; 1994).

## <A>Globalization and Comparative Education

Perhaps more than any other theme, globalization has provoked expanding interest and lush debate within the field of Comparative Education. Most definitions of globalization begin with the idea that the integration of human societies across pre-existing territorial units has sped up, assisted in part by the development of new information, communication and transportation technologies that compress time and space (Mundy, 2005). For some authors, the main motor of integration is economic – the expansion of truly global chains of commercialized production and consumption and the development of a knowledge economy. Others focus on the cultural and political drivers. Whatever the focus, central to all theories of globalization is the notion that interregional and “deterritorialized” flows of all kinds of social interaction have reached new magnitudes in recent history. Conceptually, globalization challenges Comparative Education’s traditional focus on national systems of education. It also creates new opportunities for understanding those aspects of the educational enterprise that transcend national borders.

Several dimensions of engagement with the issue of globalization in the field of Comparative Education are worth highlighting. First, comparativists have been at the forefront of scholarship that shows how economic globalization has contributed to increasing fiscal constraint among states – with profound implications for the funding and organization of national systems of education (Carnoy, 1999). Escalating pressures for the expansion of free trade and global competition have forced national governments in all parts of the world to reposition their economies. They find themselves under pressure to view education more as an investment in human capital for competitiveness than as part of a range of measures of social



provision and protection to ensure the welfare of all citizens. Economic globalization raises demand for skills and qualifications, but reduces the state's capacity to meet it. This creates new openings for the expansion of private educational services, particularly at higher levels, and new incentives for efficiency reforms at lower levels. Reduced budgets and increased migration and cultural exchange have also challenged the state's ability to use education to achieve social cohesion (Green, 2002).

Many scholars in Comparative Education have begun to document how a common set of educational reforms, organized around goals of market-like accountability and efficiency, have spread around the world (Ball, 1998; Steiner Khamsi, 2004). In this volume, Chapter Five by Stephen Anderson and Malini Sivasubramaniam and Chapter Thirteen by Anna K. Chmielewski, Joseph Farrell and Karen Mundy explore two aspects of these global reform agendas – the heightened effort to engineer school effectiveness and improvement and the expansion of international testing regimes. Comparativists have also studied the expanding influence of key intergovernmental organizations – the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, as well as regional organizations such as the European community, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (see for example Dale and Robertson, 2002; Henry et al., 2001; Mundy, 1998; Robertson et al., 2002). They have begun to make sense of the expansion of other transnational flows – for example, the growth of transnational social movements, teachers unions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating for a universal right to education (Mundy & Murphy, 2001); and the implications of expanding transnational flows of students and transborder delivery of services in higher education.

The infusion of postmodernism and postcolonial theories into the field of Comparative

Education has profoundly shaped the field's engagement with the concept of globalization. Postmodern and postcolonial theories challenge the assumption that globalization is mainly an economic process. Instead, globalization is understood as a cultural process, in which Western modernity, science and rationality play a powerful role in the subjugation of other peoples and cultures (Crossley & Tikly, 2004; see also Paulston, 1996). In turn, postmodern and postcolonial scholars focus attention on the subversive and hybrid nature of local responses to cultural globalization, using ethnographic and subjective approaches to research (Hickling-Hudson, 2006). In the recent work of Kathryn Anderson Levitt, Michel Welmond, Anne Hickling-Hudson, and Amy Stambach, among others, we see how local communities engage and reshape globalization in the everyday practices surrounding the school (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). In Comparative Education, postmodern and postcolonial scholarship has promoted the inclusion of diverse perspectives and ways of knowing, drawing upon Freirian pedagogy, transformative learning, and the experience of indigenous and subaltern cultures. Chapter Seven by Kara Janigan and Vandra Masemann, and Chapter Six by Katia Sol and Jean-Paul Restoule bring forth some of these perspectives by highlighting the comparative study of gender in education and of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.

Today, most research in Comparative Education still acknowledges the importance of national governments in shaping the educational destinies of the world's people. However, globalization has stoked interest in what Arnove, Torres and Franz have described as the "dialectic between the local and the global" (Arnove, Torres & Franz 2013). The field is now animated by questions of whether and why systems of education are homogenizing or retaining their local characteristics (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Ramirez & Boli, 1987), and whether national educational systems can enhance social equality and social cohesion in the context of

globalization (Green, 2002). Joseph Farrell, Caroline Manion and Santiago Rincon-Gallardo (Chapter Three), Sarfaroz Niyozov (Chapter Four) and Karen Mundy and Robyn Read (Chapter Eleven), each tackle these questions in quite different ways in their contributions to this volume. These include the rise and spread of a global "Education for All" movement, alternatives to traditional schooling and the influences of developing country cultural contexts on teaching practices. We will also learn how educational traditions in East Asian countries have shaped their response to globalization in Chapter Two, by Ruth Hayhoe and Li Jun.

Comparativists also remain deeply concerned with the role that education can play in the normative construction of society both globally and locally, and are deeply exploring educational practices that can enhance opportunities for dialogue among peoples, cultures, societies and civilizations and prepare active, self-reflexive global citizens. The growing comparative study of civics and moral education, multicultural and anti-racist education, conflict and peace education, and education for global citizenship has reached an all-time high, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Eight by Monisha Bajaj, Chapter Nine by Mark Evans and Dina Kiwan, and Chapter Ten by Kathy Bickmore in this volume (see Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2002).

#### <A>Forward to this Volume

Chapters in this volume illustrate some of the main contributions of Comparative Education to the study of teaching and schooling. The authors draw on comparative research from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and touch on themes including educational cultures, the right to education, teacher formation, alternative pedagogies, testing, conflict resolution and global citizenship. Each chapter is paired with a suggested audiovisual

resource, intended to provoke further thinking and debate, and to give students a visceral feeling for the challenges and rewards of looking at educational issues through a comparative lens. In addition, each chapter concludes with key questions for discussion, and a list of suggested readings.

Why study comparative education? We hope this chapter has given you a sense of how understanding education in other cultures, regions and contexts may enable you to think freshly and differently about the curriculum, classroom organization and approaches to teaching commonly used in North American schools. We hope that the approaches to comparative education we have introduced will enable you to reflect critically on widely held assumptions about education and society that may need to be questioned. Most of all, we hope you will be stimulated to develop your own principles of education in dialogue with educators and scholars who have developed the field of comparative and international education over the past century and a half.

#### <A>Discussion/Reflection Questions for Chapter One

1. What experiences of cross-cultural learning are you aware of from ancient or medieval history? In what ways is comparing a natural aspect of human learning?
2. What role has human emigration played in Comparative Education? Do you think it is still important in the present period? Why or why not?
3. Which names of educators in this chapter were already familiar to you? Which of those new to you attracts your interest and why?

### <A>Film Suggestion

Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World's Most Surprising Education System (2011) [running time is 60 minutes]

This film comparatively explores the Finnish and US education systems, the former being amongst the highest performing systems in the world. Using observation and interviews with students, teachers, parents, administrators and government officials, the film seeks to highlight the factors of success characterizing the education system in Finland and then use these to suggest gaps or areas where the US may learn and improve. Topics include, but are not limited to, teacher recruitment and training, curriculum, organization of schooling, pedagogy, system reform and vision, and the wider policy, socio-cultural, economic and political context. The film can serve as an excellent resource for studying and thinking about what makes an education “successful” and the challenges of applying lessons learned from one system to another.

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